

□ 1515

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Delaware for giving me this opportunity to discuss the concept of Head Start, which is a significant program that does a great deal of good for kids who are in dire need of this kind of service.

If indeed the decisions that we made in life were always of a vast contrast, differences were black versus white, night versus day, even the simple ones of right versus wrong, our life would be easy and our choices would be easy.

But, unfortunately, life is not like that. The decisions and choices we get to make are always going to be a shade of gray. We are given oftentimes two goods, and we have to decide which is the better choice. How we make those decisions identifies us as individuals; but it also defines what we are as a society.

This particular debate today is dealing with one of those basic choices between two goods. We have one of the big differences with this particular reauthorization of Head Start versus the reauthorization of Head Start that we passed last year, both of them good bills, is the concept of faith-based institutions within these two bodies.

One of the things that bothered me also as a speech teacher is as we are talking about this issue, sometimes we are talking different angles, kind of like ships passing in the night, without discussing the same definition of terms.

One side will say that faith-based institutions should not be used because of the hiring practices. If this institution decides to hire within their own religious group, a program that is legal both legislatively as well as judicially, then they should not be used in the concept of Head Start, or used as a program for Head Start. It has nothing to do with proselytizing, it has to do with whether they should be used at all. The other side simply says value is what is best for kids. Those are two goods. Neither one is necessarily bad. The issue is: Which is more important to us?

I am going to make the argument to you that if we really want to define our society, what we have to do is to say our highest value for this education program is what is best for kids. If, indeed, a faith-based institution is the best program to help kids break the cycle of poverty, understand the importance of education to try to lead a better life and improve their lives and their family's at the same time, then that has to be our highest value. That must be our highest value.

What we have to do is avoid the biases that we have on any other issue. The question is what best helps kids. Once again, if a faith-based institution is the best way of helping a kid, do it. For heaven's sake, do it. Do not hold kids hostage to our own social dogma. It may not be a bad social dogma, but

the question is, where is our priority? What are our values?

With these kids who desperately need this help, this assistance, the most important thing is to give them that help so they can move forward and they can break the poverty cycle, and they can move on with their lives and help themselves and their families at the same time.

If that is not our goal, if that is not our purpose, if we are really not talking about how to help kids best, then we are fooling ourselves and making poor choices and kind of demeaning the entire debate and discussion of what the Federal Government will do in the area of education.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, we will have a chance to discuss these issues again in some other format, but I would urge my colleagues to remember we have to make a choice somehow, and our choice should be in the best interest of kids, and everything else, everything else, has to be secondary to that goal.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, we have just heard the suggestion that some programs might be better if only the program sponsors could discriminate in employment. We hadn't heard those arguments for over 40 years before this administration came in.

Let's talk about when you say "protect civil liberties," what liberties you are protecting? If you are protecting somebody's right to tell somebody they can't get a job because of their religion, if you can discriminate against someone because of their religion, racial discrimination laws essentially cannot be enforced. So who are you protecting? You are protecting the one trying to discriminate; the victim of discrimination loses all protection.

The children of families of unpopular religions will ask their parents why they couldn't get a job in the Head Start program, and they will have to be told they are not hiring people of our religion. Just what kind of Head Start is that?

Proponents are saying we lose opportunities. We have plenty of opportunities in Head Start. All we have to do is fund it more, and there will be plenty of opportunities for Head Start programs.

There has also been a suggestion you may have to take icons off the wall. If icons have to be taken down, it is because of a violation of the establishment clause of the Constitution. Let me tell you, passing a motion to recommit will not solve a violation of the establishment clause.

Forty years ago race and religious discrimination was found to be so reprehensible that we made it illegal even with your private funds. Now we have a plea to protect the people trying to discriminate and not the victims of discrimination. We need to leave the law

the way it has been for the last 40 years. We can keep the antidiscrimination laws and those programs. Any program that can get funded with this faith-based initiative amendment could be funded anyway if you just comply with the antidiscrimination laws that have been in effect for the last 40 years.

We ought not to have to tell our children why certain parents can't get a job in a program because we are failing to protect the civil rights of the victim of discrimination because all of a sudden we are interested in the civil rights of the person trying to discriminate.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Chairman, as we pass the reins of our Nation to future generations, we must acknowledge that America's continued prosperity in the global economy will not be ensured unless we equip our children, the leaders of tomorrow, with the tools they need to succeed down the road.

To achieve this, we must cultivate not just the most privileged students, not only our brightest students, but also the students who grew up with disadvantages. Indeed, we must nurture the potential of all our children because it is in the best interest of our country to maximize the contributions and success of every American.

I recently visited a Head Start program at Indian Trail Elementary in my district in Louisville. The veritable beehive of activity there spoke louder than 40 years of studies on Head Start progress, but they said the same thing: The thoroughly engaged children were actively building a solid foundation for their futures, and they were loving the pursuit.

Like their predecessors, the 1,800 Head Start students in Louisville and the 1 million nationwide are making tremendous gains in family literacy, vocabulary, early writing, letter recognition, and social behavior, skills that will pay huge dividends in their future pursuits.

We have an opportunity today to extend and improve this program which is so vital to the preparation of today's youth, who in turn are critical to America's future. It is our moral responsibility and I believe our honor and privilege to reauthorize Head Start, and I urge my colleagues to join me in doing so.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

We are told over and over again in committee hearings from experts and scholars of all natures that we could close 50 percent of the achievement gap